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CAN CHRISTIANITY ALLY ITSELF WITH MONISTIC ETHICS?

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I

The term monism is variously used in modern philosophical thinking. In a sense every philosophy is monistic that attempts to explain reality by means of a single principle, whether that principle be matter or mind or something of which both matter and mind are the expressions or manifestations. Adopting this meaning we might call materialism and spiritualism and the so-called identity or double-aspect theory monistic systems: materialistic monism, spiritualistic or idealistic monism, and parallelistic monism. In each case it is assumed that however different the things of the world may seem, they are ultimately the same in essence or in nature. Sometimes the term monism is employed synonymously with pantheism and in antithesis to pluralism, characterizing the view that reality is fundamentally one, a unity of which the many are the manifestations. Here the problem is concerned not with the essence or nature or stuff of reality, but with the relation or connection or form of things: individuals are but seemingly independent; in reality all particular objects and minds are expressions of a fundamental world principle, the real and true independence. Monism in this sense can easily go with monism in any of the other senses: there is one basal and universal reality, universal matter or universal spirit or universal identity, of which all things are parts or expressions or reflections.

Very frequently the term monism is applied as a specific label for the double-aspect theory: that reality is both mental and physical. Here mind and body are two phases or aspects or manifestations of one and the same underlying principle. Monism in this sense appears in several forms. The mental and physical series are two

aspects of one and the same substance or substratum. The one substance has two attributes or qualities, a physical side and a psychical side. Each one of these attributes takes equal rank with the other. Wherever there is mind there is matter or body, wherever there is body there is mind. Mental processes and material processes run parallel with each other in the universe; none can ever exist without the other. When a change takes place in the mental world a corresponding change takes place in the world of bodies, and vice versa. But the two worlds are independent of each other, each must be explained in terms of itself. Physical processes must be explained physically; changes in the material world can never be caused by mental processes. Mental or psychical processes must be explained mentally; changes in the mental realm can never be brought about by material processes. At the same time both phases of existence are the expressions of an underlying reality. From monism conceived in this way there follow several necessary consequences: automatism, mechanism, determinism, and pan-psychism. The body is a machine, an automaton, having its mental side, it is true, but uninfluenced by the spiritual factor; indeed, this has no more power over it than the melody has over the harpstring or the shadow over the object of which it is the shadow. The universe is an animated universe, however, a universe of spiritual processes, which keep time with the physical events, but neither influence nor are influenced by them. Mind on this theory is not necessarily conscious mind; there are many gradations of mind, all the way from the unconscious to the conscious. Moreover, the essential quality of mind is not necessarily intelligence, but may be will or impulse or blind striving, which manifests itself as force in the stone and clear consciousness in man.

This world-view is easily transformed into an idealistic or spiritualistic monism. The question arises: What is this underlying principle which manifests itself in such different ways? It is unknowable, say some; it is its attributes, the unity of its attributes, say others: the vibration in the brain, for example, and the thought process form one being. But still another interpretation—and this is the idealistic one—is to regard the two attributes as two ways of looking at one and the same reality. In other words, looked at from without, externally, through outer perception, the principle of things appears to be

extended, material, or physical; looked at from within, through inner perception, it is unextended, psychical or mental. Looked at from without, the principle is brain vibration, let us say; looked at from within, it is thought or mind or consciousness. The principle of reality looking at itself, becoming aware of itself, is mental; mind is therefore the true reality; in introspection reality comes face to face with its true self; the world is at bottom what it appears to be in consciousness. The world is at bottom a spiritual world: the world of bodies is only the way it appears to mind from a certain angle or point of view, as it were.

This idealistic monism may be completed in a pantheistic sense. There is one all-pervading, all-embracing spirit, of which all minds and objects are the reflections or expressions or manifestations or parts. Just as there are many thoughts, feelings, and impulses in my individual mind, and this mind of mine is yet one, a unity in diversity, so all the individual minds are thoughts in the universal mind or world-soul, parts of it as the parts of an organism are parts. Just as my mind is its thoughts, its mental processes, just as it expresses itself in its ideas and feelings and volitions, just as the self as knower and the self as known are one, so God and his thoughts, the different minds and objects of the world, are one. God manifests himself in nature and in minds; he is in them, they are in him; he is they, they are his ideas.

It may perhaps be said that this form of monism is the dominating theory of modern philosophical thought. It is presented in its clearest and most attractive form in Professor Paulsen's *Introduction to Philosophy*, a book which has gone through as many editions in Germany as Büchner's materialistic and atheistic *Force and Matter*. Nor is this conception unknown to modern Christian theology: indeed, it is often asserted that this mode of thinking represents the *Weltanschauung* of the educated clergy today. It has received clear and popular expression in the *New Theology* of Mr. Campbell, and it is his presentation of the theory that we shall particularly keep in mind in discussing the subject of this article: Can Christianity Ally Itself with Monistic Ethics? In the next section we shall let Mr. Campbell tell us in his own words what is his conception of monistic ethics and on what philosophical foundation it is reared.

II

The word God stands for the uncaused cause of all existence, the unitary principle implied in all multiplicity. By God is meant the mysterious power which is finding expression in the universe, and which is present in every tiniest atom of the wondrous whole. In order to manifest even to himself the possibilities of his being God must limit that being. There is no other way in which the fullest self-realization can be attained. Thus we get two modes of God—the infinite, perfect, unconditioned, primordial being; and the finite, imperfect, conditioned, and limited being of which we are ourselves expressions. And yet these two are one, and the former is the guaranty that the latter shall not fail in the purpose for which it became limited. We can only think of existence in terms of consciousness: nothing exists except in and for mind. The universe is God's thought about himself, and in so far as I am able to think it along with him, "I and my Father (even metaphysically speaking) are one." The so-called material world is our consciousness of reality exercising itself along a strictly limited plane. The larger and fuller a consciousness becomes, the more it can grasp and hold of the consciousness of God, the fundamental reality of our being as of everything else. Our ordinary consciousness is but a tiny corner of our personality; it is not all there is of us. Of our truer, deeper being we are quite unconscious. Our true being belongs not to the material plane of existence but to the plane of eternal reality. This larger self is in all probability a perfect and eternal spiritual being integral to the being of God. The surface self is the incarnation of some portion of that true eternal self which is one with God. It is probable that the higher self is conscious of the lower. The higher self of the individual man unfolds more of the consciousness of God than the lower self, but the lower and the higher are the same thing. Moreover, the whole human race is fundamentally one. Ultimately your being and mine are one and we shall come to know it. Individuality only has meaning in relation to the whole, and individual consciousness can only be fulfilled by expanding until it embraces the whole. Nothing that exists in your consciousness now and constitutes your self-knowledge will ever be obliterated or ever can be, but in a higher state of existence you will realize it to be a part of the universal stock. I

shall not cease to be I, nor you to be you; but there must be a region of experience where we shall find that you and I am one.

The highest of all selves, the ultimate self of the universe, is God. The body is the thought-form through which the individuality finds expression on our present limited plane; the soul is a man's consciousness of himself as apart from the rest of existence and even from God—it is the bay seeing itself as the bay and not as the ocean; the spirit is the true being thus limited and expressed—it is the deathless divine in us. The soul therefore is what we make it; the spirit we can neither make nor mar, for it is at once our being and God's. What we are here to do is to grow the soul, that is to manifest the true nature of the spirit, to build up that self-realization which is God's objective with the universe as a whole and with every self-conscious unit in particular. My God is my deeper self and yours too; he is the Self of the universe and knows all about it. The whole cosmic process is one long incarnation and uprising of the being of God from itself to itself. There is no such thing as perfect freedom in a finite being. Perfect freedom belongs only to infinity; finiteness implies limitations. But there is a certain amount of individual initiative and self-direction, that is, a limited freedom. As to personality there need be no fear that it will finally be obliterated on this theory. The being of God is a complex unity, containing within itself and harmonizing every form of self-consciousness that can possibly exist. No form of self-consciousness can ever perish. It completes itself in becoming infinite, but it cannot be destroyed.

The problem of evil is solved in the usual way of pantheistic theories. Evil denotes the absence rather than the presence of something. It is not a principle at war with the good; good is being and evil is not being. In our present state of existence evil is necessary in order that we may know that there is such a thing as good and that we may realize the true nature of life eternal. Evil is not a thing in itself, it is only the perceived privation of what you know to be good, and which you know to be good because of the very presence of limitation, hindrance, and imperfection. Nor is pain in itself evil, it is the evidence of evil, and also in a different way the evidence of good. Pain is life asserting itself against death, the higher struggling with

the lower, the true with the false, the real with the unreal. There are some things impossible even to omnipotence, and one of them is the realization of a love which has never known pain. If creation is the self-expression of God, pain was inevitable from the first. Love is life, the life eternal, the life of God. Love is essentially self-giving, it is living of the individual life in terms of the whole. In a finite world this cannot but mean pain, but it is also self-fulfilment. The law of the universe is the law of sacrifice in order to self-manifestation. In this age-long process all sentient life has its part, for it is of the infinite and to the infinite it will return. In the slaughter of the rabbit and the stag nothing perishes but the form, the life returns to the soul of the universe.

What is sin? Sin is the opposite of love. Sin is selfishness; the true life is the life which is lived in terms of the whole, the sinful life is the life which is lived for self alone. Sin is self-ward, love is All-ward. Sin is always a blunder; in the long run it becomes its own punishment, for it is the soul imposing fetters upon itself, which fetters must be broken by the reassertion of the universal life. Sin is actually a quest for life, but a quest which is pursued in the wrong way. The dedication of life to something higher than self-interest is of the very essence of true morality, and its highest reach is perfect love. Religion is the response of human nature to the whole of things considered as an order; morality is the living of the individual life in such a way as to be and do the most for humanity as a whole; it is making the most of oneself for the sake of the whole. True morality involves the duty of self-formation and the exercise of judgment and self-discipline in order that the individual life may become as great a gift as possible to the common life. Hence there is a vital relation between morality and religion, the one implies the other and both are based on the immanence of God.

Our present consciousness of ourselves and of the world can reasonably be accounted a fall, for we came from the infinite and to the infinite perfection we shall in the end return. Our true being is eternally one with the being of God, and to be separated from a full knowledge of that truth is to have undergone a fall. But the purpose of this fall is good, and there is nothing to mourn over except our own slowness in getting into line with the cosmic purpose. The imper-

fection of the finite creation is not man's fault but God's will, and is a means toward a great end.

Two tendencies are ever in conflict in nature, the struggle for self-preservation and the struggle for others. The two tendencies are antithetic and must be in opposition until the life-ward (disinterested) tendency absorbs the self-ward, and God is in all and love reigneth world without end. Sin is the divisive, separating thing in our relations with one another and with God, the source of all. Until Jesus came no self-offering had been so complete and consistent. To be effective the atonement has to be repeated. The divine nature is present potentially in every human being. What needs to be done is to get it manifested or brought forth into conscious activity. If sin is selfishness, salvation must consist in ceasing to be selfish: it represents the victory of love in the human heart. This may be represented as the uprising of the deeper self, the true man, the Christ man, in the experience of the penitent. The Christ, the true Christ who was and is Jesus, but who is also the deeper self of every human being, is saving individuals by filling them with the unselfish desire to save the race. The spirit of man and the spirit of God are one, hence the infinite life behind the human spirit will assert itself irresistibly against the endeavors of sin to inclose that spirit with finite conditions. The uprising of Christ in the individual soul must inevitably mean pain to the man whose true life has been entombed in selfishness. Pain caused by sin arises from the soul, which is potentially infinite and cannot have its true nature denied. You cannot continue to live apart from the whole, for the real you is the whole, and do what you will it will overcome everything within you that makes for separateness, and in the process you will have to suffer. This is what punishment of sin means. It is life battling with death, love striving against selfishness, the deeper soul with the surface soul.

We must destroy the social system which makes selfishness the rule. We want collectivism instead of competition; we want the kingdom of God. Collectivism must be the expression of the spirit of brotherhood working from within. We can at least recognize the presence of the guiding spirit of God in all our social concerns, and work along with it for the realization of the ideal of universal brotherhood. We can show men what Jesus really came to do, and as his servants we

can help him to do it. We can definitely recognize that the movement toward social regeneration is really and truly a spiritual movement and that it must never be captured by materialism. The New Theology is the theology of this movement for it is essentially the gospel of the kingdom of God. The mission of the New Theology is to brighten and keep burning the flame of the spiritual ideal in the midst of the mighty social movement. It is ours to see God in it and to help mankind to see him too.

III

This idealistic monism, if it is logically carried out, is full of all the difficulties and open to all the objections which have been urged against pantheistic systems in general. If God is the one and only independent reality, what, we may well ask, becomes of the independence of individuals? If they are mere expressions or manifestations of his nature, they cannot be absolutely free and responsible personalities. If God exhausts his being in all existing personalities or consciousnesses, if these personalities constitute God, then the term God is but a collective name; there is no personal God, and the term pantheism is a misnomer. If, however, God is a personal consciousness and all other personalities are reflections or thoughts of God, then the other personalities are personalities in name only; the thoughts are the thoughts of another person who has or is these thoughts. To call us God's thoughts is to rob us of our independence. Of course, there is no objection to all this, provided we do not afterward make claims with respect to these matters which we have already waived in our premises. If, on the other hand, we try to save our personal independence and yet insist that we are persons in the personality of God, the problem arises, How can there be countless persons in one person? Moreover, if everything is the reflection of the one basal spiritual principle, God, then all the sin and evil in the world are the expression of God's nature, just as much as the good is, and God is responsible for the evil as well as the good. That too may be the only valid conclusion, but if it is, then we must stick to it in our thinking, and not forget that we have drawn it.

These difficulties have caused some of the more recent pantheists to make compromises with theism and dualism; indeed, few pantheists have had the courage to accept the logical consequences of their

premises. This is as true, it seems to me, of Thomas Hill Green as of Mr. Campbell. The German philosopher, Krause, has coined the term *panentheism* to designate such a compromise system or rather amalgamation of systems. According to the New Theology, for example, God reveals himself in everything; nothing that exists is outside of God. God must limit himself in order to realize himself; to know his own possibilities he must take on finitude. Imperfection, finitude, conditionality, limitation, and everything these imply are therefore necessities of God's being. There are two modes of God: the infinite or perfect and the finite or imperfect, the latter being the expression of the former. God is immanent in this finite universe, indeed this finite universe is part of him. But this finite universe does not exhaust God, his nature is not fully revealed in these expressions; there is a mode of God that transcends. We have here the attempt to reconcile the transcendency of God, a doctrine peculiar to theism, with his immanency, a doctrine peculiar to pantheism. The infinite transcendent God *wants* to express what he is; he is ceaselessly uttering himself through higher and ever higher forms of existence; it will take him to all eternity to live out all that he is. The universe, including ourselves, is one instrument or vehicle of the self-expression of God; he is the universe and infinitely more. Professor Paulsen offers a similar compromise:

Immanency and transcendency do not exclude each other. Theism cannot exclude the immanency of God in the world. If God is the creator and preserver of all things, it is his power in the things which gives them their reality at every moment of time. On the other hand, philosophical pantheism does not exclude transcendency; God and nature do not absolutely coincide. This is true as far as their quantity is concerned. The nature which we see is finite, God is infinite; it is merged in him, but he is not merged in nature. The world known to our cosmology is but a drop in the ocean of reality. The same statements may be made of his quality. The essence of things as it is known to us is not absolutely different from God's, but God's essence itself is infinite; it is not exhausted by the qualities of the reality which we behold: by mind and body extension and thought, or however we may designate the most general qualities of existence. Hence God is transcendent in so far as his infinite nature infinitely transcends the reality known to us.¹

These attempts at a compromise between theism and pantheism, to reconcile immanency with transcendency, do not, however, remove

¹ *Introduction to Philosophy*, English translation, p. 257.

the difficulties in the problem of the personality and the responsibility of both God and man. Thus we are told by the New Theology that there is a deeper side of our being, which is perfect and eternal, and integral to the being of God. In our surface self, our ordinary everyday consciousness, we are wholly unconscious of our real and true self, though the real self may be conscious of the so-called lower self. To our everyday surface consciousness the world appears split up into individuals, the surface soul is a dividing, separating consciousness; in reality, however, there is no such division anywhere; my deeper self and my surface self are one; your self and my self are one, the whole human race is one; God and all life are one, he is the highest self. If these statements were taken at their face value, they would lead us to believe that all individualization was an illusion of a human consciousness, that there were no real personal selves, except the self of God. Then the teaching that God limits himself, expresses himself in finite forms, would lose its bottom, the so-called finite manifestations of God would be mere appearances, the apparitions of a finite consciousness and not real expressions of a self-limiting God. How there could be such a surface consciousness to conjure up these ghosts of separate beings, would be a mystery of mysteries! But this cannot be the real thought of Mr. Campbell; in his monistic enthusiasm he evidently forgets that God does actually express himself in finite individuals, that the separation while it lasts—and it will go on forever—is a real separation. He forgets what he has said: that “the being of God is a complex unity, containing within itself and harmonizing every form of self-consciousness that can possibly exist.” If we accept this view of the case, then God expresses his being in human persons; the subconscious core of the human personality is a part of God’s nature; it is “the deathless divine in us.” According to the logic of the situation the true self in me is really God’s self; human personalities are like blossoms on the stock of reality, or the crests of the wave of the infinite ocean of existence. I am a thought in the mind of God, not the mind that does the thinking, not a real independent personality. Besides, I am a *passing* thought. God will think other thoughts by and by, thoughts like me perhaps, but not me, for “the cosmos is changing every moment,” “God is ceaselessly uttering himself through higher and higher forms of existence.” “To

see one form break up and another take its place is no calamity, however terrible it may seem, for it only means that the life contained in that form has gone back to the universal life, and will express itself again in some higher and better form."

This is real pantheism. But Mr. Campbell does not stick to this text consistently; he modifies his doctrine in such a way that the different parts will not hang together. God is a complex unity, as we have already seen; the subconscious selves seem to be eternal realities in God, and not mere passing thoughts after all. "I shall not cease to be I, nor you to be you." Indeed, not only the subconscious or higher selves endure, but even the surface consciousnesses appear to be immortal. We shall come to know that ultimately your being and my being are one. "I build my belief in immortality on the conviction that the fundamental reality of the universe is consciousness, and that no consciousness can ever be extinguished, for it belongs to the whole and must be fulfilled in the whole. The one unthinkable supposition from this point of view is that any kind of being which has ever become aware of itself, that is, has ever contained a ray of the eternal consciousness, can perish." "No form of self-consciousness can ever perish." Here we have a kind of intelligible kingdom, a world of spirits, a divine person who expresses himself in separate persons who seem to be eternal. The doctrine reminds one very much of Origen's doctrine of the eternally created son of the Father, only here we have an eternal creation of countless sons of the Father. It is an attempt to save both monism and pluralism by adopting them both.

We find similar inconsistencies in the ethical teachings of the New Theology; efforts are made to draw the consequences of a monistic philosophy and at the same time to secure to the individual a share in the work of realizing the divine purpose. We are told that we can neither make nor mar this inner, true self of which we have already spoken; and which is our being and God's. If we keep to this view, there is nothing for man to do but to let things take their course. If we can neither make nor mar the real self, if we are not even conscious of it, if it is in the last analysis the inexorable God working out his own salvation, realizing himself, then what use and chance is there of the surface consciousness doing anything that counts? It is true,

we are reminded, that we are helping him to utter himself when we are true to ourselves; "*or rather, which is the same thing, he is doing it in us.*" And we are encouraged to "grow the soul," to manifest the true nature of the "spirit," to put ourselves in line with the cosmic purpose, to bring it forth into *conscious* activity, but after all, the divine nature, the true man in us, will assert itself, the true self will win, whate'er betide. How can this conscious surface self, which is as nothing to the universal, deeper self, a mere ripple on the wave, influence the basal self, of which it is not even conscious?

Sin, it is said, is selfishness, living for self alone, while morality is living a life for humanity as a whole. The struggle for self-preservation and the struggle for others are two conflicting tendencies in nature. Sin is the attempt to misuse the energies of God, it is the expression of individuality at the expense of the race. The life of love is the God spirit manifesting itself. But so on the monistic theory must selfishness be an expression of the basal principle of things. God *wants* to limit himself, he wants the world as it is; and he *must* limit himself; in order to realize his nature he must become individualized. That means pain and sin of course, but these things are inevitable. Hence the struggle of love and selfishness cannot but be a struggle of the limiting God with himself and within himself. So that if sin is the attempt to misuse the energies of God, it must be God who is misusing his own energies, for all energy is in God, or rather is God. There seems to be a certain dualism in God's nature. Yes, the farther back we go in the history of the race, the stronger the self-ward tendency is, the fiercer the struggle the more divided is God's own being between light and darkness. But the victory is assured for the love principle; love will win, the disinterested tendency will absorb the self-ward tendency, and God will be in all and love will reign world without end. Do what you will, the real you in you, the love side, will overcome everything in you that makes for separateness and sin. "The infinite life behind the human spirit will assert itself irresistibly against the endeavors of sin to inclose that spirit with finite conditions." The fight is after all God's fight, and the outcome is certain. All the individual can do is to put himself in line, but whether he does so or not, it would seem that the result will be the same; as in the rigorous determinism of ancient Stoicism:

volentem jata ducunt, nolentem trahunt. It is hard to see how the surface self's unwillingness to fall in line could retard the march of the innermost love-self; indeed it is not easy to understand how there can be any opposition between the surface self and the deeper self, since the former is the partial manifestation of the latter.

Here again we seem to get a dualism, a dualism within the individual himself, if we look at the matter from the point of view of the individual. It is the antagonism between the self-ward and the disinterested tendencies, and the antagonism will be overcome by the victory of love. But here again the teaching is not consistently adhered to. We are told that the struggle for self-preservation and the struggle for others are antithetic, but we are also told that morality is making the most of *oneself* for the sake of the whole. Common sense comes to the rescue of the New Theology, and the exaggerated opposition between the self-regarding and other-regarding impulses is toned down. It is held that the disinterested tendency will absorb the self-ward one, but it is also held that true morality involves the duty of *self*-formation and the exercise of judgment and self-discipline in order that the individual life may become as great a gift as possible to the common life. Here again common sense triumphs against the strict logic of monism. So long as there are individuals, there must be *self*-ward tendencies; there is no help for it. We can have no personal life without self-assertion. Nor can we care for others unless we first care for ourselves. And so long as there is society, there must be disinterested tendencies and acts. There is no irreconcilable conflict between the *self*-ward and the *other*-ward strivings of our nature. The problem of morality is to fashion the so-called egoistic and sympathetic impulses in such a way as to bring about a proper balance between the two. Irrational egoism is bad, and irrational sympathy is bad. The problem is not to eradicate the self-ward tendencies, for that would mean the elimination of selfhood. It is my duty to save my own soul as well as to help save others. And so long as personalities exist and persist, so long as self-realization is at least part of the ideal—and the New Theology asserts that the selves will never disappear, but will go on perfecting themselves—so long will the self-ward tendencies be essential elements of human nature. The purpose of living is to realize selves; and living for the whole can mean nothing but

living in such a way that human personalities, my own included, may reach their fullest fruition. The absolute absorption of the self-ward tendencies by the disinterested tendencies, would be the obliteration of all personal selves. If everybody sacrificed himself for everybody else, there would be nobody left upon whom the benefits of such a sacrifice could fall. In placing a value upon other personalities I am tacitly fixing a value upon my own; if their souls are worth saving, mine too must be worth saving.

IV

To me there seem to be two lines of thought running through most of the modern pantheistic systems: the one monistic, the other dualistic or pluralistic. The one shows the author's desire to reason logically from his premises, the other betrays his unwillingness to accept consequences which conflict with the beliefs of common sense. As we have seen, some attempt is made to spin out the monistic thread. Everything is God, man included; God expresses himself in a countless variety of finite forms. This self-limitation carries with it sin and pain and evil, but all these will be overcome in the process of cosmic evolution through which God will realize his nature; everything comes from the infinite and to the infinite it will return. Human personalities are not exceptions to the rule, they too are manifestations of the Godhead, dependent on God for what they are and do. Through them, as through everything else, he realizes his purpose; they, however, have no real independence; as reflections of the divine essence they can have no influence on the core of things. So the monist goes bravely on until he reaches man. Then forgetting the logical demands of his system he halts and reconstructs his notion of the human personality: he endows it with a certain degree of initiative and self-determination, he gives it immortality, he makes it eternal. In this way he tries to save the independence of the human personalities. But he tries to save his monism too, by making human personalities parts of the complex unity of the Godhead. He must have his cake and eat it. But as this might seem to limit God, he adds another story to the edifice of his philosophy, and God becomes a transcendent, infinite being, in whom there are no limitations, in whom all dualisms and differences are overcome.

The answer to the question therefore: Can Christianity ally itself with monistic ethics? depends in part upon what phase of the monistic philosophy, as taught by modern writers, we emphasize. One phase of it *is* Christian in the sense that it agrees with the popular Christian world-view: it teaches the transcendency and spirituality of God, the immortality of the soul, and the freedom of the will, freedom enough to enable man to help in realizing the Divine purpose in the universe. In these respects there is no obstacle to an alliance between Christianity and systems like the New Theology which call themselves monistic. But, as I have repeatedly pointed out, these systems are not consistently monistic. They are patchwork philosophies. A strictly logical monism or pantheism leaves no room for independent personalities. If I am the thought in the mind of God, I am dependent upon him who thinks me, I am a part in a great system of thoughts; and by and by when this system gives way to another as it must in the process of evolution, I shall be no more. To say that there are such *independent* personalities and that they are eternal *manifestations* sounds to my ears like a contradiction in terms: it represents the endeavor to save both pluralism and monism. Now whether Christianity can ally itself with a *consistent* monistic theory will depend upon how we interpret Christianity. If Christianity means a belief in a personal God, the immortality of the soul, free will, human responsibility for sin; if it teaches a dualism between God and world, soul and body; and if these doctrines are essential to a belief in Christianity; then, obviously, it cannot ally itself with a philosophy which denies most of these things. If the deeper subconscious self in me, the true core of my being, is in reality God himself; and if *I*, meaning by me the everyday conscious self, can neither make nor mar this deeper self, if it is bound to break all fetters and to realize God's purpose; if all the surface consciousness can do is to recognize the purpose of God, but neither hasten it nor retard it; then Christianity as popularly understood will find its ethical occupation gone. The only way to reconcile it with such a monistic, deterministic, pantheistic doctrine is to interpret Christianity allegorically, and when it comes to that, almost any system can be read into it.

So far, however, as the practical moral precepts of monistic ethics are concerned, Christianity will have no difficulty with them.

Whatever may be the metaphysical views of idealistic monism, this philosophy urges men to strive for the highest good, to help realize the purpose of the universe or the will of God. Even the Stoics with their rigorous determinism ask us to live according to nature or reason, to act in accordance with the will of the world. And so we shall find no great difference between the practical morality enjoined by modern pantheists and that enjoined by modern Christians; they preach the same virtues. There is nothing, for example, in Professor Paulsen's *System of Ethics* which a modern Christian cannot accept, in spite of the pantheistic foundation upon which it is reared. I say *modern* Christian, because if Christianity is taken to be an ascetic, world-denying religion, aiming at the uprooting of all natural impulses, then, to be sure, an ethical teaching like Professor Paulsen's is in spirit opposed to Christianity.

V

There is another problem connected with this whole discussion upon which I have not touched, and that is the relation of Jesus to God and man. It is held that this is the paramount question of the Christian religion, that the truth of Christianity depends upon the divinity of its founder. The New Theology offers the answer which is characteristic of monistic or pantheistic systems written in a Christian key. The answer is as follows: Jesus was divine simply and solely because his life was never governed by any other principle than perfect love. But this is not to say that we shall not reach the standard too; quite the contrary; we must reach it in order to fulfil our destiny. If by deity is meant that Jesus possessed the all-controlling consciousness of the universe, then assuredly he was not the Deity; his consciousness was as purely human as our own. We cannot, however, dispense with the doctrine of the Trinity; we have to postulate God, the universe, and God's operation within the universe. The universe is an expression of that side of God's being which can only be described as the ideal or archetypal mankind. Whatever else God may be, he is essentially man, i.e., he is the fount of humanity. There must be one side of the infinitely complex being of God in which humanity is eternally contained, and which finds expression in the finite universe. Jesus is the fullest expression of that eternal divine man in the field of human history, of the fontal or ideal Man

who contains and is expressed in all human kind. But as we have come forth from this mortal manhood, we too must be to some extent expressions of this eternal Christ. Jesus lived his life in such a way as to reveal the very essence of the Christ nature. He is therefore central for us, and we are complete in him. Here is the goal of all moral effort—Christ; here too is the highest reach of the religious ideal—Christ.

We have here the old Platonic philosophy applied to Christianity. The eternal and perfect idea of man in the intelligible world or in the mind of God reveals itself in countless finite and imperfect forms, Jesus being the most complete exemplar of the original and eternal type that has thus far appeared. The archetypal man is the Christ, the logos, the son of God, the *δεύτερος θεός*; the historical Jesus is one of the many reflections of the true reality. It is not to be supposed that the Christian religion would cease to exist if this doctrine should be accepted; for it is after all in the example of Jesus rather than in any metaphysical theories or dogmas about him that the moral strength of Christianity lies. At the same time the teaching means no more than that God contains within himself the potency of the highest type of human being conceivable, that he has expressed this type in Jesus, that he is approximating it more or less in all human beings, and that he will finally realize it in humanity as a whole. This thought is a cheering thought and one with which any religion can ally itself provided it does not take too seriously the logical consequences of the teaching to which we have constantly called attention. But, carried to its logical conclusions, it is not in harmony with a religion that seems so careless of the type, so careful of the single life as Christianity, that places such a high value upon the human personality.

VI

In conclusion it should be stated that we have considered this entire problem solely in its logical bearings. We have asked whether a consistent monistic philosophy and Christianity agree in their teachings, and have found that they do not. The question whether it might not be possible and perhaps even better for Christianity to adopt this monism in spite of logical difficulties, has not been considered by us. Can Christianity thrive in combination with a world-

view theoretically contradicting it? It has been linked with all kinds of doctrines in the past, without losing its practical efficacy and it would doubtless survive a union with modern pantheism in the future. Religions are not logic-proof systems of thought. There are difficulties and inconsistencies even in theistic conceptions, similar to those we have pointed out in pantheism, but they have not prevented large numbers of thinking men from accepting theism, nor have they led to any marked changes in Christian practice. The inconsistencies are generally ignored, and the thinker experiences no uneasiness in holding a theory in his metaphysics that does not exactly agree with his ethics. Thus, for example, if God created the world and everything in it, then the world is a manifestation of his Nature. Then too God created man and is responsible for him, and it is hard to see how man can be free under these circumstances. But even if we should admit a certain degree of freedom, God would still be responsible for man's acts because God could have made him so that he would always choose the good. It is hard, in other words, on such a hypothesis to shift the responsibility for evil from God. A theology that teaches an absolute creation out of nothing can hardly be differentiated from pantheism. The only way to relieve God of responsibility for evil in the universe is either to explain it away or to call it by another name or to place it in the service of good, or to put the blame for evil on something independent of God, that is, to introduce another principle into the universe. This last alternative would give us dualism or pluralism; it would relieve God of the responsibility for sin and evil, but it would at the same time limit him. We see, theology like philosophy has its antinomies.